

A Night to Forget

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Summary: A hungover Mr. Gold awakens in a bedroom that he does not recognize. He begins to recall speaking to a beautiful girl at the bar the night prior.

1. Chapter 1

_I wrote this under the name 'Goblet of Doctoberfest' as part of the 2016 Rumbelle Showdown on Tumblr. This entry did NOT appear in the showdown because I was exempt from participating that round, but I wanted to keep my momentum going so I randomly selected one of the given prompts and went with it. Please note that I'm keeping this open-ended as a potential Tumblr prompt verse. _

A Night to Forget

_Tick-tock. Tick-tock. _Gold groaned as he awoke; the sound of the clock was pounding at his aching head. The more awake he became, the louder the sound was.

_Tick-tock. Tick-tock. _

He opened his eyes slightly and looked around the room, immediately realizing that he had no idea where he was. Gold tried to sit up, but quickly recognized that would take more effort than he was ready to attempt, so he simply did his best to focus on his surroundings and assess the situation.

It was a bedroom; that much was clear, as he was lying in a bed. A bed with pink sheets and a comforter with a design of roses. He then looked at the nightstand. That bloody clock â€“ mocking him. There was also a photo on the nightstand; he squinted at it â€“ in the photo was a young girl with two people that he presumed were her parents. That girl â€“ he knew her. She was younger in the photo but â€“ that was the girl he met at the bar the night prior, the

resemblance was clear. What the hell was her name? Betty? Brenda? Belle " yes, that was it, Belle. She sat down next to him at the bar and started talking to him and " somewhere during the conversation his memory of the night became fuzzy. How much did he drink anyway? Did they " no, he couldn't have, not in the state he must have been in. Could he? Gold noticed his suit folded neatly on the chair next to the bed, and his cane propped up against it, and suddenly realized that he was wearing nothing but his boxers. Oh good god, what had he done? He moved to try and sit up a bit more just as she entered the room. Gold couldn't help but marvel at how beautiful she was. He may be hungover but he wasn't blind.

"Hey, you're awake. How do you feel?" Belle asked, plopping herself down on the edge of the bed.

"I, um " I'd feel much better if that damned clock would stop taunting me."

"Oh, I'm sorry " it was my mum's, I'm kind of used to it. I find it soothing. But you probably don't right now, do you?" Belle picked up the clock and removed the batteries, and the ticking stopped.
"Better?"

"A bit," Gold replied.

"You know, I have something else that'll make you feel better, I'll be right back." Belle flitted out of the room and came back in less than a minute later with a glass of some unidentifiable beverage. She sat down on the bed again. "Can you sit up? Drink this, it's amazing."

"What is it?" Gold asked as he slowly sat up, leaning his back against the headboard.

"Hangover cure. Family recipe. It really works, try it." Belle handed him the glass. Gold took a sip and then made a face. "I know it doesn't taste the best, but I promise it's worth it." Gold took another sip.

"I do apologize, I " I remember meeting you at the bar " Belle, right?" Belle nodded. "I just don't remember " how I got here."

"I didn't think you would, you were pretty drunk. I offered to take you home, but " you couldn't really recall your address. I asked to see your license and you told me you didn't live there anymore, so " what was supposed to do, leave you passed out on the sidewalk? I figured the best solution would be to bring you to my place. I was going to have you sleep on the sofa but you wanted to use the bathroom, and it's attached to my room. I went in after you to get ready for bed and when I came out you had taken off your clothes and passed out on my bed. Figured it was pointless to ask you to move at that point."

"You " you slept here with me?"

"It's MY bed, I'm entitled to sleep in it. Don't worry, you stayed on your side. How's that hangover doing?" Gold had been slowly taking sips of the concoction Belle had given him.

"Better. I think."

"Good. I washed your shirt, by the way. You spilled a drink on it." Gold blushed in embarrassment. "I'll go get it, it should be dry by now, I'll be right back." Belle left the room and came back a few minutes later with Gold's shirt and a bottle of water. "Here you go," she said, handing both of them to Gold. "You should probably try to drink some water, too."

"Thank you," Gold said, and he put his shirt on and took a drink of water. "So, I um â€“ I'm at a bit of a disadvantage here. What, exactly, happened last night?" Belle smirked at him.

"Well â€“ I was supposed to meet my friend Ruby for drinks last night, and two minutes after I got to the bar, she texts me and tells me she's canceling because this doctor she's been mooning over since forever asked her out. So I thought, fine, I don't need a friend there to have a drink or two, so I sat down at the bar, and â€“ you were sitting next to me. You'd already had a drink or two."

"I do recall that part, yes. Go on."

"Well, you looked really sad, so I started talking to you. You seemed suspicious of me at first -"

"I'm suspicious of everyone at first," Gold interjected.

"Yes, I gathered that. Anyhow â€“ after a few more drinks you were a bit more talkative. You told me about your ex-wife, your son, the fact that she wants to take him off sailing with her new boyfriend whom you clearly can't stand, and your son doesn't want to go, and now you'll have to go to court to fight this, which will be difficult because you don't have primary physical custody because your wife hired one of your ex-lovers who also has a vendetta against you as her attorney. You also said that you're not sure which of them is the bigger bitch, and you're quite positive that one if not both of them slept with the judge in order to pull off the ruling in her favor, because your son does NOT want to be with his mother. You had just spent an entire day in court, things were not going well, and so you decided to hell with it all, and you went to the bar. And now you're here."

"Told you all that, did I?"

"Yes, you did, Callum."

"I told you my name, too?"

"Well, it was only fair, I told you mine. Anyhow, after our very long conversation, by the end of which you were quite drunk, as I said, I offered to take you home, you couldn't really explain exactly where that was, so I said you could stay at my place. And here we are."

"Yes, here we are. Did I â€“ I mean, did we -"

"Callum, you were far too drunk for that. Plus, I um â€“ I don't do that on the first date. You did kiss me though, so â€“ there's that." Gold was quiet for a moment.

"I have to admit â€“ I don't know where to go from here. You seem

like a lovely girl, and "you're probably far too young for me anyway, although I would love to see the look on Milah's face if I walked into court with you on my arm, especially if you were wearing those yoga pants and that '_I Believe in Fairies'_ t-shirt." Belle smiled a bit. "Perhaps it would be best if I just got dressed, said 'thank you,' and " left."

"I'm not too young. I'm twenty-eight, and you can't be more than your late forties, right?" Gold chuckled.

"Now you're just humoring me."

"Maybe I like you."

"How? I didn't exactly make a good first impression. I'm probably not making much of a second one, either."

"How about this? I'll take you to get your car, you go home, get cleaned up and get a bit of rest, and we'll meet for dinner tonight. Let's say six at Granny's. We'll just pretend last night didn't happen. Consider it a night to forget. We can even pretend we're meeting for the first time if you'd like. See what happens."

"What if nothing happens?" Gold asked.

"What if something does? What have you got to lose?" Gold hesitated for a moment as he thought about it.

"Honestly? I can't think of a damn thing." Belle smiled at him.

"I'll let you get dressed then. You up for me taking you to your car to drive home?"

"I think so. You were right " that cure works wonders."

"Told you it would," Belle said, and Gold sighed as he watched her leave the room. She was going to be trouble; he could already tell. And she'd be worth every bit of it.

2. Chapter 2

_So this is a fic now hopefully a short one! Feedback is appreciated! Rating is now M. _

Chapter 2

Gold entered his apartment and immediately flung himself onto the sofa, closed his eyes, and sighed. He hoped that if he could get a few more hours of sleep his hangover would be gone and he would be much more presentable for his date with Belle that evening.

Belle. He couldn't for the life of him understand what a lovely young girl like that wanted with him, let alone the fact that she was kind to him the night before when he was at his absolute lowest. Most women wouldn't have even struck up a conversation with a partially inebriated stranger at a bar, let alone take him home with her and take care of him once he had drunk himself into a blackout state. She, however, was clearly not most women. Gold grinned a bit and

closed his eyes, the image of the beautiful, petite brunette fresh on his mind as he started to drift off to sleep.

He had barely nodded off when his cell phone began to ring. Gold grumbled and reached into his pocket. He looked at the number and moaned, then accepted the call.

"What?" he asked tersely.

"Where the hell are you?" the other voice, a shrill, female voice, barked at him.

"Where I am is not your concern, Milah," Gold replied.

"It certainly is when your son is waiting for you. You promised to take him to the movies this afternoon, or did you forget about that? Not that it would surprise me if you did."

Fuck, Gold thought to himself. He had promised Bae they would go to the movies this afternoon, but it completely slipped his mind due to his hangover.

"I um â€“ I'm sorry, I overslept a bit this morning. I'll be there as soon as I can, tell Bae I'm very sorry." Gold hung up the phone, then sat up and groaned. The last thing he wanted to do today was sit in a crowded movie theater with a bunch of screaming children. But he wasn't about to break his promise to his boy. Gold stood up, stumbled toward the bathroom, and cleaned himself up the best he could.

* * *

><p>Gold rang the doorbell at the large pink house â€“ HIS house, that she had all but stolen out from under him â€“ and waited, his bloodshot eyes covered by a pair of sunglasses, his hair barely combed, and a days' worth of stubble covering his face, as he had no energy to shave before he left. Milah opened the door and eyed him up and down.</p>

"What's wrong with you?" she asked.

"I'm sure you already have a lengthy list of things that you have compiled, Milah, I don't know why you need me to add to it," Gold retorted. Milah reached for his sunglasses and ripped them off of his face.

"You're hungover, aren't you?" Gold grabbed his glasses back from her.

"I am fine, just woke up with a bit of a headache this morning, and this conversation is not helping it any."

"Right. Bae â€“ your father's here!" Milah shouted as loud as she possibly could, and Gold cringed at the sound of her voice. Milah smirked at him smugly, reveling in his obvious discomfort.

Bae came charging toward the door - a happy, exuberant 10-year old boy. "Hey Papa!" Bae shouted, and charged into Gold's arms for a hug.

"Hey, sorry I'm late, son," Gold said, trying not to grimace in pain

and failing miserably. Milah noticed and smirked once again.

"Have him back by four, he has homework to finish," Milah demanded. Gold just sneered at her, and turned to walk away with Bae at his side. Milah slammed the door loudly, causing Gold to cringe one last time.

"You okay, Papa?" Bae asked, noticing immediately that his father wasn't feeling well.

"Just a bit under the weather today son, no need to worry. So â€“ what are we going to be seeing?"

"Can we go see The Jungle Book?" Bae asked.

"Isn't that a fairly old film?"

"No, it's not a cartoon, it's new, with people. Please, Papa!"

"That sounds fine, Bae. Whatever you like," Gold agreed, hoping that his son wouldn't notice if he took a nap during the film.

* * *

><p>Belle entered Granny's diner at about ten minutes till six. She was wearing a yellow sleeveless dress with black sandals, her hair perfectly coiffed and hanging down over her shoulders. "Hey, Belle â€“ what are you all dressed up for, you got a hot date or something?" Ruby asked.</p>

"Kind of â€“ I'm actually meeting someone here. I met this guy last night and â€“ well, we made a date for this evening, just to talk â€“ see what happens," Belle replied. "I was kind of hoping we could get one of the booths in the back, where it's quieter."

"Just cleaned one up, it's all yours," Ruby said, and she walked back to the booth with Belle. Belle sat down and Ruby sat down across from her. "So is he cute?"

"He's â€“ handsome. I wouldn't say cute â€“ he's a little older than me. He has these sweet, big brown eyes."

"When did you meet him?" Ruby asked.

"Last night when you ditched me at the bar," Belle said. "Thanks for that."

"Well, if this works out, maybe you will be thanking me," Ruby replied.

"So how'd it go with Dr. Whale?" Belle asked.

"It was okay. We're going out again later this week â€“ it's promising but â€“ he does have a bit of a rep, so -"

"Like you don't," Belle teased. "You working all night?"

"No, I'm actually off in an hour, I've got a paper to finish for Professor Asshole," Ruby said.

"You do know how proud I am of you going back to school and getting your degree, right?" Belle reminded her.

"Yeah, whatever â€“ it would just be so much easier if I didn't have to take this class. I'm a business major, what the hell do I need a sociology class for?"

"They just want you to have a well-rounded college experience, that's all."

"I have plenty of experience," Ruby joked.

"Not THAT kind of experience," Belle said, rolling her eyes. "You've got what, another month? You'll survive."

"You don't know this guy Belle, he is a total dick. I'll be lucky if I get out of this class with a C, it's really gonna pull down my GPA. Asshole won't even offer extra credit, even though half the class asked for it."

"I'm sorry, Rubes. I had my share of bad professors too â€“ listen, if you need help studying, you know I'm here for you."

"Thanks," Ruby said. "I better get back to work." Ruby stood up, turned around, then crouched back into the booth with Belle. "Oh, shit â€“ you will NOT believe who just walked in."

"Who, your asshole professor?" Belle joked.

"YES!" Ruby said, trying not to shout. "What the hell is he doing here, he's never been here before!"

"I'm sure he just came to eat, he is a human being," Belle said.

"That's debatable," Ruby remarked.

"Maybe he'll order to go. I need to keep an eye out for my date," Belle said, and she stood up and saw Gold walking toward her. "Oh, there he is! Callum! Over here!" Belle called out. Gold was dressed in a suit, and was clean shaven with every hair in place. Ruby's eyes widened.

"That's your date?! Belle â€“ that's the asshole! Professor Gold!"

"What? Well, you never told me his name!" Belle said.

"What did you think, his name was Professor Asshole? It should be though. Belle, you cannot go out with him, he's a jerk! Nobody likes him â€“ seriously Belle, ditch him."

"I'm not ditching him, I made a date and I'm keeping it," Belle insisted.

"Belle â€“ don't you look lovely," Gold said, and Belle blushed a bit.

"You too â€“ I mean â€“ you look very nice," Belle replied. Ruby just stood gaping at the two of them. Gold glanced at her for a

moment.

"I know you â€“ miss â€“ Miss Lucas, you're in one of my classes," Gold said.

"Y â€“ yes, sir," Ruby replied nervously.

"Well â€“ small world. I take it you'll be serving us this evening," Gold said. "How much extra do I have to pay for you not to spit in my food?"

"Ruby won't do that â€“ will you Ruby?" Belle asked.

"Of course not â€“ be right back in a few minutes to take your orders," Ruby said, and she darted away from the table as Belle and Gold sat down.

"Well â€“ this is awkward," Gold said. "I take it from your exchange with her that you're friends then?"

"Very good friends," Belle said. "She's actually mentioned you quite a bit, just â€“ not by name," Belle said.

"Let me guess â€“ Professor Asshole, is that it?" Gold asked, and Belle just blushed. "I know what my reputation is Belle, you don't have to pretend otherwise."

"I'm sure you're not that bad," Belle said.

"You've never had me for class," Gold replied.

"You didn't tell me you were a professor," Belle said.

"You mean all of the information I drunkenly spouted to you last night, and that little tidbit wasn't among the data you received from me? I am very sorry." Belle giggled a bit.

"It's okay. It'd be pretty boring if I already knew everything about you anyway. So â€“ feeling better then?"

"Yes, I took a lovely ninety-minute nap at the movies today. I had forgotten that I promised my boy I'd take him and fortunately he was so enraptured by the film that he didn't notice."

"What did you see? I mean sleep through?"

"_The Jungle Book._ It looked like a good film from the five minutes I managed to stay awake for and the reaction my boy had to it after, I'll have to actually watch it someday when I'm not hungover. Belle, I â€“ I do apologize again for last night. I started to remember bits and pieces of the evening and I made quite an ass of myself."

"You were hurting, it's alright. Your ex-wife sounds like a nightmare."

"Yes, that would be an understatement. However, I don't want to spend another evening talking about my miserable problems. I'd like to know more about you, Belle. What do you do for work?"

"I'm a librarian. I'm actually the manager of the Storybrooke Public

Library," Belle said.

"Ah. Well, that explains why we've never met, I've never been there, I use the campus library."

"You ready to order?" Ruby asked, approaching the table. She glared at Gold.

"Hamburger with fries. Extra pickles," Gold said.

"That costs extra," Ruby said.

"Of course it does," Gold replied. "How about I just agree to pay double the cost of everything to ensure that my meal isn't poisoned?"

"She's not going to do anything to your food, right Ruby? I'll have the same, by the way," Belle said. Ruby grabbed the menus off the table and walked away.

"I wouldn't be too certain â€“ I'm not exactly her favorite person," Gold said.

"You can't be that bad," Belle said.

"Oh, but I can. I don't teach to make friends with my students, Belle, I teach to teach them something. Their impression of me, for better or worse, is not my concern, but I guarantee you that I DO make an impression."

"I'd hate to read your student reviews," Belle joked.

"Oh, they're quite amusing, I look forward to them every semester," Gold joked. "Belle â€“ if you want to back out of this date, I totally understand."

"Why would I want to do that?"

"Oh, I don't know â€“ our first meeting was me getting drunk out of my mind and blathering to you about my miserable life, our second encounter was me half naked in your bed, hungover and no memory of how I got there, and our third meeting you find out that I'm the man who is terrorizing your friend's academic career. Not exactly a good resume for a potential suitor."

"I don't judge people until I truly get to know them," Belle said. "You seem to care a great deal about your son. I'd say that's a very good quality in a man. Trust me â€“ you're already a far better catch than my last boyfriend."

"Really? What was he, a serial killer?" Belle giggled a bit.

"No, just a misogynistic pig. My father set me up with him, he thought we'd get on."

"And how is your relationship with your father after that?" Gold asked.

"Not great," Belle answered. "He never really understood me, but then â€“ he's a bit on the misogynistic side as well. Anyhow, I um â€“ I

want to get to know you, Callum. If you'd like that."

"Wouldn't be here if didn't," Gold replied. Belle reached across the table and took his hand. She thought about all that Ruby had told her over the past two months about her professor from hell, and the fact this man was sitting across from her, and she was getting lost in his puppy dog eyes and chiseled features. She wasn't sure what was so enticing about this man " but she was drawn to him in a way that she couldn't even put into words. Belle French never believed all that much in kismet, but for some reason " tonight she was staring to consider the possibility.

* * *

><p>Gold got out of his car, opened Belle's door, and offered her his hand as she exited the car. "Thank you for the ride, Callum. It really wasn't necessary, it's only a five-minute walk."</p>

"Can't be too careful " a young girl walking all alone in the dark. Who knows what kind of maniac you could meet," Gold said as he walked her to the door.

"Well, you're very sweet. I had a lovely time tonight. I take it your food was good?"

"Yes, I believe the tip I offered your friend assured that she wouldn't tamper with my meal," Gold replied. "So " now what?"

"I think this is the part where you give me a kiss goodnight?" Belle asked.

"Would you like that?" Gold asked.

"I think I would, yes," Belle replied. Gold became visibly nervous, and he looked down at the ground.

"I, um " I'm not a very good kisser," Gold admitted.

"Why don't you let me decide that?" Belle moved in and pressed her lips against his, and it was barely a second before their mouths opened and their tongues were exploring one another. They kiss lasted over a minute until they finally had to pull apart and catch their breath.

"Wow," Gold whispered, and Belle noticed that he was shaking nervously.

"I think you're a very good kisser, I don't know who told you that you're not," Belle said. "So " would you consider this our first or our second date?"

"What's the difference?" Gold asked.

"Well " if this was our second date, then that would make our next one our third date and " there is that third date rule," Belle teased.

"Belle, you um " I mean, this is all rather fast, don't you think?"

"I suppose it is. Alright â€“ this was the first date, then," Belle said. "You'll call me, right?"

"Of course I will," Gold said.

"Alright then. Good night," Belle said.

"Good night, Belle," Gold said, and Belle entered her house and leaned against the door, her heart racing as she let out a loud sigh. It was only a moment when the doorbell rang, and Belle jumped a bit, startled, then she opened the door. "I â€“ you never gave me your number," Gold said.

"Oh. Oh, that's right â€“ what's your number, I'll text you," Belle said.

"555-0414," Gold replied. Belle took her phone out of her purse and sent a text. "I will call you â€“ you have my word."

"Can't wait," Belle said, and she smiled a huge smile at him. Gold hesitated for a moment, then moved in to kiss her, and they shared another deep kiss.

"I should go," Gold said.

"You probably should," Belle agreed.

"Alright then," Gold replied. "Goodnight. Again."

"Goodnight," Belle said, and Gold pulled away from his gaze on Belle and walked away. Belle closed the door, then two seconds later opened it again. "Callum! I just realized we never had dessert," Belle called out to him, and Gold turned around.

"No we did not," Gold replied, and he walked back toward her door.

"Would you like some? Dessert?" Belle asked.

"Do you have anything prepared?" Gold asked.

"I have some cookies. They're store bought, but -"

"That sounds lovely," Gold said, and he entered the house. Belle took his hand and led him to the sofa.

"Be right back," Belle said, and she flitted out of the room, then came back a minute later with a plate of Oreos. She set them down on the coffee table, and Gold grabbed a cookie and took a bite. "So, um â€“ we did say goodnight so â€“ would this count as a second date?"

"You seem quite eager to get to that third date," Gold commented after he finished his cookie.

"I'm sorry. This is going a bit fast, isn't it?"

"Just a bit," Gold replied.

"I'm not like this, I swear I'm not â€“ I waited months before my

last boyfriend and I â€“ and I mean, it wasn't even like I wanted to, I was just â€“ curious if he lived up to all the hype he built up around himself and trust me, he did NOT, so â€“ I mean â€“ I'm not the type that just -"

"Neither am I," Gold interjected.

"I just â€“ I really like you, Callum, and â€“ well, you like me too, right?" Gold chuckled a bit.

"Belle â€“ I hate Oreos," Gold admitted. "Really not a fan of most cookies at all."

"You do? Well, then why did you â€“ oh," Belle said.

"Belle, my life is a mess right now. I'm going through an ugly custody battle, I hate my job, and the last person that I considered a friend is now working for my ex-wife. You are the first flicker of light I've had in my life in I don't know how long. I just want you to understand that â€“ I'm a difficult man to â€“ be with."

"I don't mind difficult. I find easy to be quite boring, if I'm being honest."

"Belle, we just met yesterday, and not exactly under the best of circumstances. I don't want to rush into anything here. Not with you," Gold said.

"I know. I just feel â€“ I don't know â€“ connected to you somehow. I know, that probably sounds mad, doesn't it?"

"Completely mad," Gold replied. He moved in close to her, and kissed her, this time moving his lips down her neck and sliding his hand up to cup her breast from outside her dress.

"Callum," Belle whispered.

"Hmmm?" Gold mumbled as he slid his tongue behind her ear.

"Can we count three kisses as three dates?" she asked. Gold pulled away from her.

"I don't have anything, Belle. Protection, I mean."

"Oh," Belle said, a disappointed tone in her voice. Gold grabbed his cane and stood up.

"I should probably go," he said, and he started to walk toward the door.

"We can do other things," Belle suggested, and Gold turned around. "I mean â€“ not everything needs protection, right?" Gold thought about it for a moment.

"I don't want to drag you into my mess of a life, Belle."

"You're not dragging me anywhere. I'm going with you willingly." Gold hesitated again.

"Oh, bloody hell," he finally said, and Belle practically pounced on

him and kissed him.

End
file.